

Nobody Here But Us Orientals

When northern Florida's Flagler County was told to integrate its dual school system in 1970, the school board made a bizarre response. How could they comply, asked the board members, when no one had ever given them a legal definition of a Negro? The Department of Health, Education and Welfare duly moved to fill the bureaucratic gap. Negroes, it explained, were "persons considered by themselves, by the school or by the community to be of African or Negro origin." The same sort of definition, added HEW, held for Orientals, Chicanos and Indians. At that, the Flagler County school board pronounced all its teachers and students Orientals because they were so "considered by the school." Thus, only one race attended classes in the county, and no discrimination was possible.

It took a federal district court ban to end the Florida "absurdity." Said Chief Judge John R. Brown, in reviewing the case for the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals: "This court has seen, heard, or heard of everything—everything, that is, until today."

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Josh,

I thought that you might be interested in this, in view of your earlier response to a similar kind of thing.

Charlie Stewart